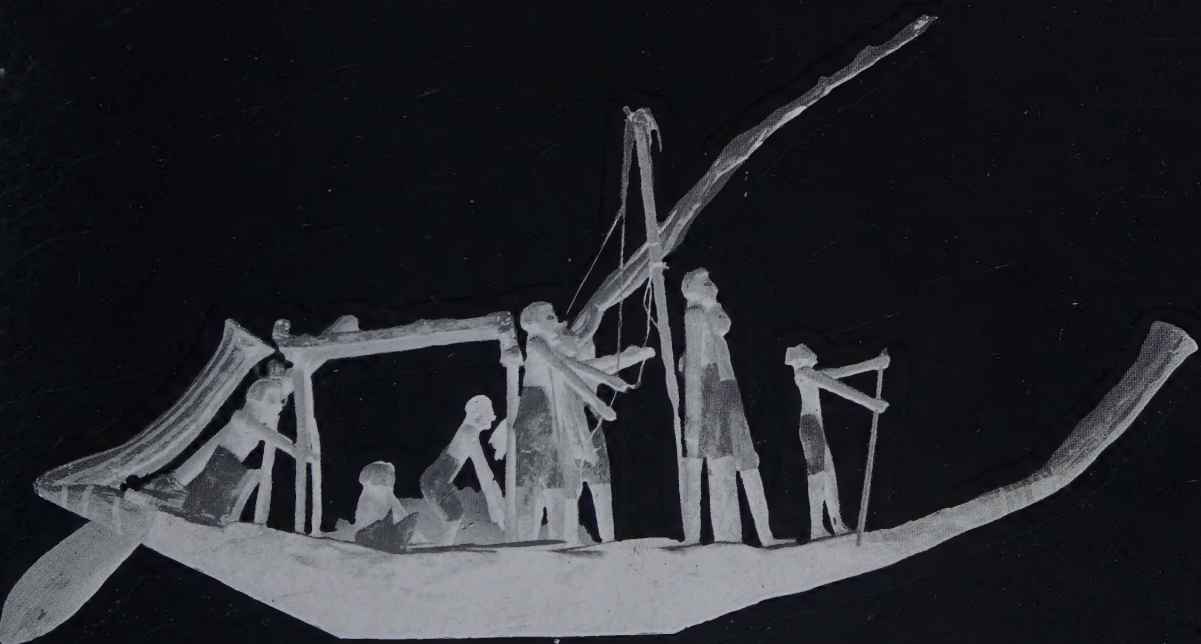


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The Background of Egyptian Art

by Alexander Dorner

THE coldness of the Ice Ages, which periodically covered North America and the northern part of Europe with layers of ice three thousand feet thick, apparently gave impetus to all human culture. The lowering temperatures, and the scarcity of food which was thus entailed, forced the inhabitants of the northern hemisphere to secure their existence by their inventive genius. They learned how to kindle a fire, how to fashion from flint weapons, and then utensils. Hence, this period is called the *Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age*. It reaches over an area which extends from England to Egypt and Mesopotamia and comprises a half million years in time.

These primitive beings as far as we may judge from their latest representative, the so-called Neanderthal man, were hardly yet people in our sense of the word but, in spite of this, they evolved the belief in life after death. They buried with their dead weapons, broken marrow bones to serve as food, and ocher for tattooing so that after this un-understandable but apparently only temporary interruption in their lives, they might live again as they had done before. These creatures were, then, thinking beings, and however limited their conception of the world was, at least they had a conception of it. The field in which they otherwise expressed it, in other words, where they created art, must have been in tattooing of which nothing remains.

When the glaciers once more began to advance southward about fifty thousand years ago, another later people, the so-called Cro-Magnon race, driven by the stress of another glacial period, broke into central Europe from the East and oppressed their less agile predecessors. The conquerors, likewise, lived in caves and under overhanging rocks. They, too, were *Nomadic hunters*. But their spirit was productive and they felt more the necessity of self-expression and discovered more ways to achieve it than had their forerunners. They evolved remarkably skillful methods of hewing weapons and utensils out of stone, bone and horn and began, forthwith, to scratch pictures of the chase into bones, antlers, or ivory. The earliest of these recall the first drawings of children who, more or less, recapitulate the evolutionary progress of our ancestors. Later, they molded the animal in clay or painted it on the walls or roofs of their caves. They also did some carving in the round, usually feminine figurines.

Such is the *beginning of the history of human art*. This was without doubt not intended to be art. Art for art's sake was an unknown principle until the nineteenth century. Pictures, to the primitive man, had magical significance and whether he represented animals of the chase or women, it was in the hope of possession. The more exact the picture, the more effective was the magic. For this reason we observe a constant refinement in the technique of physical and psychical seeing. This reached its peak in the Pyrenees region in the so-called Magdalenian period, i. e., between about 20,000 and 10,000 B. C. The bison, which is illustrated here, comes from the end of this period. It is a masterpiece of observation.



These paintings have been called impressionistic because they catch so wonderfully the fleeting moment; they have been compared with expressionistic art because they combine in such concentrated form the essentials of bison being, or, so to speak, of bison-dom.

They are neither one nor the other; twelve thousand years of human evolution stand between them.

The paintings of this period are *single animals*. Man of the old stone age knew no sequences and possessed no sense of coherence or organization. His world is of an appalling narrowness and one-sidedness, one such as we can hardly imagine. His entire experience is animal, yet, if the very fleshiness even of his female figurines is repulsive to us, they do betray the same accuracy of observation as do the pictures of his prey. The lightning swiftness of his seeing, the unrestrainable urge toward freedom, the careless, materialistic joy in the moment's success, all indicate the world and the art of primitive nomads. Their picture of that world is potential prey in any form. Everything beyond that does not exist for them, not even the place where the game stands, nor where the hunter himself is. The earth, and all that pertains thereto, had no significance. They knew no order of life, no provision for future sustenance, no division of labor, no invisible powers, except those which had to be appeased, perhaps the spirits of dead men and animals.

←
Bison, cave-painting, Altamira,
Northern Spain. c. 10,000 B. C.

→
Flint tools and weapons from Egypt
The pieces in the lower row belong
to the Old Stone Age (Palaeolithic
period).



Thus, the picture of that which occupies their minds, the particular beast upon which they prey, shows the creature independent of any surroundings, including space. It has no spatial location. Its legs hang down without function and without power, an impression which is enhanced by a characteristic peculiarity of many pictures of the Hunting culture, the complete omission of the feet. They are creatures of the here and now as are the primitive hunters who created them.

This was still the case in the later phase of this art found in the rock pictures in Eastern and Southern Spain and in North Africa, including Egypt, the so-called Capsian culture complex. These artists show marked progress for they portray groups and activities, i.e., they begin to think and to deal in terms of relationships. But the primitive realism of the hunt and love still constitutes the subject matter. Here also there was no scene of action, no system, no order.

The first step in this direction came with a *primitive agricultural society* which superseded the hunting culture. Toward the end of the Ice Age (c. 10,000 B. C.) Western Europe seems to have become somewhat barren. The huntsmen and fishers followed the



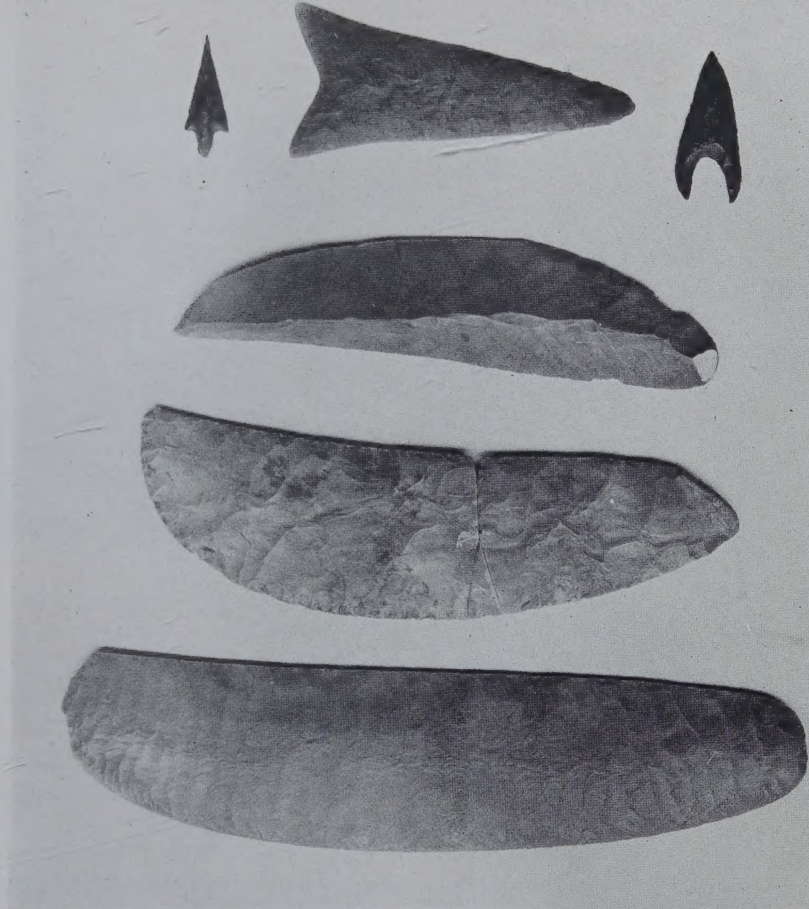
retreating ice to the north and east where the survival of their art shows continual weakening. Middle Europe, which up to that time had had only insignificant reflections of the hunting culture to show, now became the principal scene of primitive pastoral culture. This stage of development inaugurates another era, that of the *Neolithic or New Stone Age*.

Everything is diametrically opposed to what had preceded it. Only one thing remained; the oppressive, unvaried limitation. Now everything is rigid schematism and that alone; abstract divisions and subdivisions, systematic selection and arrangement within a given framework. Man has become, so to speak, rooted to the soil. His life depends upon it and on the harvest which he must gather from it in uncomprisingly regular cycles. In addition to his unfailing care of the land, he must propitiate nature that she may be kept in gracious mood, and by nature is meant the spirits of animals, plants, stones, or heavenly bodies; the spirits of the dead by whom he was now bound forever to one spot, sometimes even to one house, whether in times of plenty or in want.

Thus originated the Totems, first of families, then of clans whose chiefs were expected to maintain friendly relations with them. All that, however, meant the ruthless suppression of the ancient Nomadic instincts, rigid order and iron discipline, and the

← Middle European Clay Pottery of primitive peasant culture. Decorated with so-called abstract "cord" ornament.

→ Flint knives, arrowheads and instruments of the end of the late New Stone Age (Neolithic period). Notice the technical perfection in comparison with the earlier types. (Ill. p. 3.) Knives, as the two below, had wooden or occasionally gold-plated handles with figured designs. Egypt, IVth millennium, B. C.



never-ending observance of rites and ritual. Their desperate anxiety to uphold their organized system is the keynote to the meaning of their world, for it is the religion of these primitive farmers who had for the first time created something exclusively human. Therefore, in their art, everything is sacrificed to the idea of order and, first of all, all naturalism. Pictures of human beings become increasingly abstract and are limited to idols which they worshipped. Fertility was their Alpha and Omega and so the Mother-goddess became their most important deity. The masculine and religious Hunting culture was thus completely supplanted by an agrarian feminine culture. Artistic expression fell into woman's domain, weaving and pottery manufacture. Art forms were essentially geometric. Like and unlike were combined and ordered in a rhythmical and symmetrical whole. In the course of time, this decoration comprised more and more religious symbolism. Figural representation decreased proportionately in significance and artistic value. *Abstract linear systems, symbols of eternal order*, cover the surface and hold it together. As dramatic as the change and the progress in this culture was, it was incapable of developing beyond the narrowness of its rigid one-sidedness into greater vitality and toward a wider horizon.

This transition was effected where the men of the Hunting culture and the earliest



←
Bowl of the so-called Ist Naqada culture. White painting on red ground. Wig-wearing hunters. IVth millennium, B. C.

→
Tomb pottery of the so-called IId Naqada culture. Dark red painting on light clay. The stone jar is of red breccia. Middle of the IVth millennium.

farmers lived side by side and where each could, and did exert an influence upon the other. It was from the union of these two that a new culture was born.

Western Europe had been the cradle of the Hunting culture, Central Europe of the earliest agrarian culture. Now the focal point is in the Near East.

In the wastes which surround the Nile Valley and which, during the Ice Age, had been vast lakes and later green steppes abounding in vegetation, there exist rock cliffs where, by means of pictures, nomads and herdsmen have eternalized themselves. There are found drawings which completely agree culturally and artistically with the rock paintings of eastern Spain. Furthermore, they include a style which is found again in the white-figured clay wares of the so-called First Naqada culture. It must have been created by a hunting people, with a wiglike hairdress (see ill. above). But their art, too, still floats without any indication of order even though the zig-zag lines already give us a hint of peasant conservatism.

A vast difference is noticeable in the rock pictures which may be brought into connection with the vase painting of the Second Naqada culture of the middle of the fourth millennium B. C. Here we have clear proof that in the Nile Valley and, earliest of all, in the Nile Delta, the economy and spirit of settled habitations had not only begun, but had begun to be effective, for, however lively was their observation, particularly of animals, no less strongly was it bound by an abstract system of order. Even the typically peasant conservatism, the wish to preserve forever things as they are, has already made itself apparent.

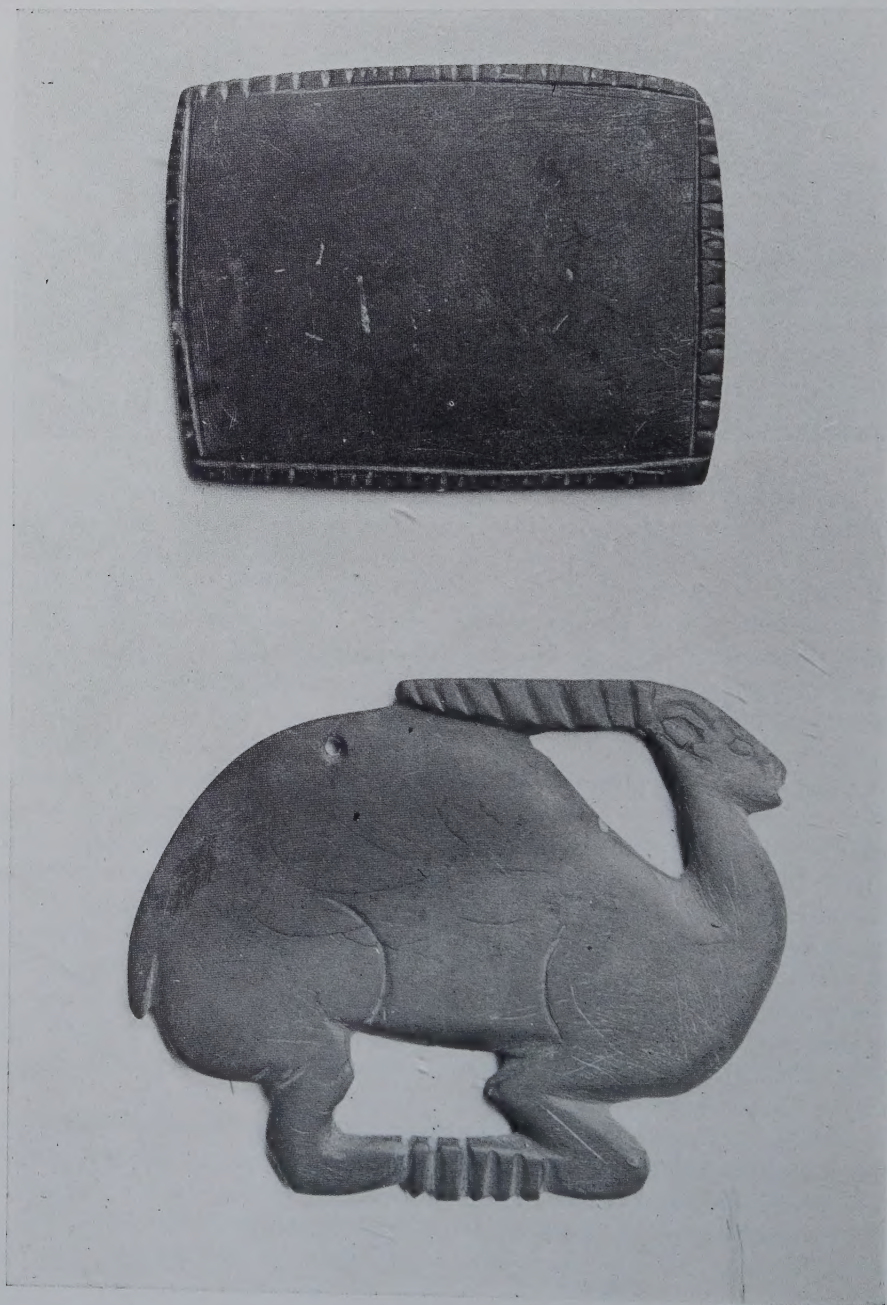


The clay vase, second from the left is, like almost all well-preserved pieces of pottery, a grave offering. The picture upon it was supposed to guarantee by its magic potency the same things to the dead as had given him security in life: the Nile riverboat with the village shrine containing the Totem, and the wild animals of the desert for game. The pictures no longer swim free and disconnectedly about; they are ordered in a row, symmetrically juxtaposed and subordinated to a symbolical system of lines and triangular planes. *The spirit of the hunter and of the peasant is beginning to fuse.*

After 3500 B. C. the process seems to have been interrupted by a wave of Mesopotamian influence which swamped Egypt for a time. In Mesopotamia as well, the ancient naturalism of the huntsman had continued along with geometric peasant art. However, the continued disturbances caused by recurrent nomad invasions endowed this art with far more brutal vitality and momentariness than characterized the Egyptian. Thus this Mesopotamian influence brought with it a new period of "floating" Realism, which seems to be characterized by the running man. (See Ill. on the comb-handle, page 10.)

However, it was but an *entre-acte* in the triumphal march of the principle of order which was to become the framework of all realism in Egyptian art. As early as 3200 B. C. we can observe the rudiments of the typical Egyptian style as we know it in the severely geometric row of elephants and lotus on the bone relief. (Ill. p. 11.) Three hundred years later it came into full flower and a thousand years after that, it had become a fixed tradition as in the grave stele of Count Heny (Ill. p. 19).

Here he stands, the Chancellor of Nether Egypt, and before him they have spread out and written down everything that could please his heart and his stomach. And yet it strikes us as peculiarly flat, rigid and almost unreal, for an iron system of arrangement prevails: everything belonging together is brought together on one horizontal line—Heny, the table with the bread and other food. This line clearly and unmistakably indicates at once both place and relation. At the same time this line represents the edge of a surface, and all there is to be shown and said in order to clarify the story is divided into horizontal sections and bounded by vertical lines. Heny, whom the whole thing alone concerns, is as tall as all these sections together which he faces. Everything



Slate tablets for grinding malachite and galene for painting the face. Second half of the IVth millennium.



So-called forehead rings of bone and shell. A round axe and two oblong axes. The axes were mounted on wooden handles. Second half of the IVth millennium.



Comb handle. Ivory. Pre-dynastic period.
Second half of the IVth millennium.

remains in the one plane of this arrangement. His body is seen from the side, except for the shoulders, which are turned so as to afford a front view. The hands, too, are bound to a definite scheme which would seem to contradict empirical reality. (See Ill. p. 17.) The table is shown from the side, the bread upon it from above. Each object is represented in the view, or is composed of those several views, which will best reproduce the mental image. Not the personal sense-impression of the artist is given, but rather a composition of individual plane pictures which, through an abstract system of lines and planes, combine into an harmonious whole. The entire relief is really a page of picture writing, framed by a flat margin.

Guaranteed to Heny by the king and the god Anubis are 1000 loaves, 1000 beers, 1000 fowls, 1000 head of cattle and 1000 of everything good for him. Heny was loved by his father, praised by his mother and was the ruler of their house.

As for all primitive peoples, pictures and writing contained spell-binding magic. Therefore this picture promises to Heny's "Ka," i.e., his material ego in the beyond, whatever he will require to secure his physical well-being and his social position in eternity. In like manner his relationship to his master and his ancestors will continue on a pleasant basis. So far as Heny is concerned, everything is assured for ever.

The primitive peasant's anxiety to maintain for ever his material *status quo* became almost pathological. In Egypt, from the time of the union of all Egyptian tribes into one great nation, there was more at stake than for the individual clans. All the tribe totems and gods had to be appeased and yet subordinated to one general deity for the whole nation. It was typical that this deity should be Re, the Sun God and chief deity of the agricultural people of Lower Egypt. Pharaoh was declared to be his son, and incarnation, and therefore almost the more important. Therefore they could not do enough for him in building him an eternal home where he was assured "a million years" of exactly the same material joys and the same power as had been his on earth. The palace of the living Pharaoh might be hewn of wood and built of clay—but his tomb could not be made sufficiently enduring or tremendous, and the best form for this tomb was, of course, the Sun God's symbol, the obelisk—the pyramid. His entire court lay around him in their tombs, arranged in severe, frontal, rectangular plan. Before 3000 B. C. these unhappy courtiers were killed by the hundreds on the occasion of a royal funeral; later

they were buried in the king's City of the Dead upon their natural demise.

Enormous financial resources were allotted to the observance of rites for the dead. Sculptures furnished the so vastly important body for the Ka. Murals depicted in detail scenes of his daily life. These things were not intended for show, but to fulfill their magical purposes in the darkness behind thick walls. What was in order on a large scale for the Pharaohs, was just as important for the lesser lords, such as our Count Heny, in proportion to their degree, and modestly for the man on the street.

All the Egyptians ever wanted or wished to express in their art was an eternal guarantee of the permanence of their inherited institutions, religious, political and cultural. It was a *purely outward summation of materialistic concepts*.

Considered in its entirety, the Egyptian religion, despite its seeming colorfulness, really comprised but a confused and rather drab agglomeration of all the deities of their antecedents. The gods never became a family of living characters such as those of the Greeks. Superficially, all the emblems and symbols were merely summed up, while endless repetitions assure the enduring order of things wherein Pharaoh appears as the god and material lord.

Only the priesthood could possibly know the countless rites necessary to bring about this permanence. Despotism by the deified Pharaoh and priestly hierarchy was the inevitable, obvious result.

The Egyptian mind also contained an equally superficial array of different and disjointed conceptions of the structure of the world. One could not have enough views on the subject, for everything must last forever, as that was the only way to guarantee peaceful permanency. These separate ideas never converged into one organic whole, into a really living vision.

Their poetry similarly was repetitious, not in our sense of the word, but rather an addition of different views of the same idea—exactly as in the Hebrew poetry. It was the same in their medicine which remained an addition of separate practical cures and never sought an organic cause behind the surface. The same held true with their arithmetic. If the Egyptian wanted to express $2/29$, he had to say: $1/24$ plus $1/58$ plus $1/174$ plus $1/232$. In other words, it was impossible for him to reduce all these units into one common denominator. As in art, he added up a series of unitary parts, and those parts were materialistic concepts, for he added 8 loaves and 12 head of cattle without ever perceiving that number might be separated from particular specifications. Mathematical speculation



Fragment of a Magic Wand(?) used for hunting purposes. Notice that elephants then still belonged to the fauna of Egypt. Probably shortly before the 1st Dynasty (between 3300-3200).

was entirely out of his sphere.

Is not this Heny relief a clear expression of this Egyptian conception of the world, the loose addition of surface views, outwardly combined by an abstract scheme of order? The views were intended to be most realistic and convincing, in order to be the more effective and useful, but were they not fixed by clear outlines and definite planes into a schematic system, they would have been senseless and lost. If, for instance, Heny were looking out of the picture at us, or if any object were shown from an angle, all the laborious continuity would have been destroyed.

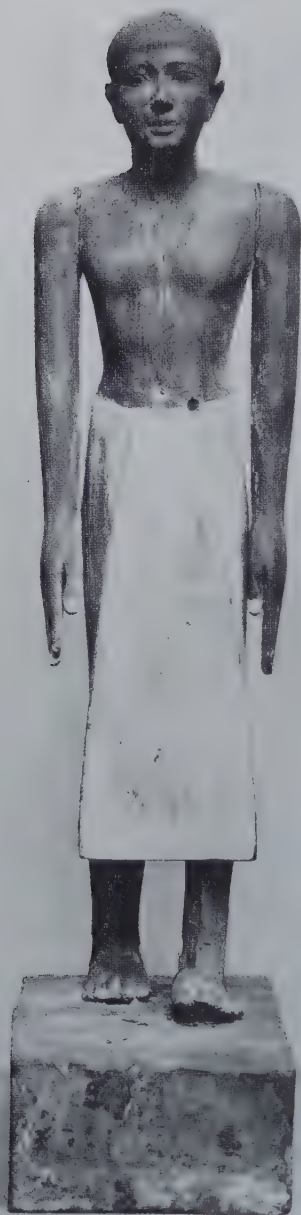
The same would have been the case if a piece of sculpture (Ill. p. 13, 14 and 15) were not viewed strictly from the front. The purpose of a statue was to preserve the identity of the Ka and to be its "eternal house." It had certain vital tasks to fulfill and was therefore represented throughout Egyptian history by a few definite types. The only way to produce security and clarity was to hold them together by a series of plane views, which showed the essential characteristics. That is how all Egyptian statues are constructed and arranged regardless of whether they were to be seen or were hidden away in the dark for all time. The frontal view as much as the profile was merely a series of consecutive plane surfaces. In no way is the sequence of these planes in space expressed. To the Egyptian, space was an empty nothing. Incidentally, it is for the same reason that the Assyrians represented their half-bestial portal figures with five legs. The Assyrians saw two legs from the front and four from the side, the one on the edge of the block was common to either perspective. It is only ourselves who have been able, since then, to see across corners, to see five legs. For that the Assyrians would have declared us to be creatures with no sense of order.

Architecture followed the same scheme. Since building technique had first progressed from cane, clay and wood construction to the erection of stone monuments, the temple grew into an ever mightier combination of original primitive house types. The temple was the eternal and therefore massive dwelling of the god or god-king, and had to contain everything which had once belonged to a house, such as courtyard, portico, inner and private rooms. The arrangement of these component parts never became more than a loose succession of frontal views. They could be added to at will, thus enhancing the effect of eternal splendor, but the principle still remained the same loosely joined series of fronts—somewhat like a string of buttons. The Egyptian felt them to be arranged one after the other upon a surface, and drew them that way. No matter whether it was the plan of a pyramid, a cliff tomb or a temple, the only view the ramps, passageways and surrounding high walls allow us is always that from the front elevation.

Even the construction of the masonry strived only after an outer meticulously accurate surface, never after a construction organically created from within out of stone members. And this surface is decorated with plane illustrations.

The mass of the building or sculpture meant the same to the Egyptians as did the embalming of a corpse—the technical means to the end of eternal permanence. It was not yet an object created for an artistic end. If the building or the statue had been viewed as extending backward in space, i.e., three dimensionally, the entire structure of the Egyptian conception of the world would have collapsed. The same is true of all architectural detail, such as a column.





Wooden statue of a priest.
XIIth Dynasty. (2000-1790 B. C.)

Egyptian columns were mostly symbols of agricultural fertility whose magic properties insured the continuity of the state. If, in the course of history, these symbols developed from reed bundles to which flowers were bound into mighty stone pillars, that did not change their meaning. Their massiveness became a technical matter, not an integral change. The Egyptian column never played a functional role as the physical support of a stone architrave, as in Greece. Regardless of its actual composition of shaft and capital, it was built up of stone sections, their surfaces smoothly connected and covered with a net of decoration as flat as a spider's web. Here again, however lively the observation of plant and animal life, it was subordinated to a rigid plane system.

The semi-darkness of the forest of pillars in an Egyptian temple and their manifold relief inscriptions never permitted a feeling of space to arise. The disjointed profusion of flat pictures did not oppress the Egyptian as it does us; on the contrary, he felt relieved at the promise of security they offered.

Although individual perception increased in liveliness, so that animal pictures particularly, attained a vital force that far outdistanced the works of palaeolithic hunters, even though at certain times there was an occasional diagonal view, yet the peasant principle of a geometric plane order remained unchanged.

We can understand this because we know that it was the only form the Egyptian knew by which to express his conception of the world. But we also understand that when the development progressed, it had to move away from Egypt and Mesopotamia to another land. The fresh young Greek nation which had rested on the outskirts of peasant culture with its geometric

forms for thousands of years, took over the leadership about 500 B. C.

The culture of the Palaeolithic hunters and the Neolithic peasants had been merged in the Oriental civilizations. In Egypt, the peaceful peasant order preponderated, while in Mesopotamia it was the warlike, active realism of the hunters. Hellenic culture drew sustenance out of an admixture of both. There is very little of either of the great Oriental civilizations which it did not adopt, but out of the combination it created something new. The floating freedom of Mesopotamian art and the mathematical system of Egypt produced the *Kanon* of the free body.

The well-ordered organism of the individual body became the sole measure and symbol of the Greek world. The deities were organized into a living family of comprehensible, vital characters. The individualistic democratic municipal state became the center of political and social life. It was crowned by its city temple, built to "resemble a well-proportioned human body." The plastic figure was the foundation and the meaning of architecture, sculpture and painting, as well as of the crafts. To the Greek, it was the sole reality. Around it was emptiness, and thus it stood freely open to all perspective views. Greek art thereby was the first in history to step from plane to body—from the second to the third dimension. Greeks for the first time dared to think them-



Seated Horus. Falcon-headed god, wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. Bronze. Ptolemaic period. (332-30 B. C.)

selves responsible agents, as their buildings and statues were independent, individual units. This gave them the courage to study nature objectively, which meant the beginning of unfettered art, systematic science and philosophy. The Greeks exercised their speculative faculty because in it they found the assurance of their concept of the world. The Egyptians detested it for it endangered their laborious compilation of "eternal order." They acted in their own interests in applying all their experience and discoveries to the material perpetuation of this order. Regardless of their profession, whether priests, workmen or artists, they were subordinate in all their individual feelings to a collective system.

A new world came into being with the Greeks. Their thoughts spread over Europe and Asia, and it was not an arbitrary decision to let this period close Ancient History and place the beginnings of present history here. However, the Classicists of 150 years ago were guilty of limited judgment in looking upon Greek civilization as *the* culture, and upon Greek art as the immortal pattern for all times. The last 50 years have taught us to abandon this absolute opinion in favor of a more relative one. Just as there were necessary and grandiose stages leading up to Greek culture, without which it would have been unthinkable, so it was followed by periods which have carried us beyond it.

Fragment of a granite relief from a temple representing Pharaoh Nekhthorheb (Nektanebis) II, 358-341 B. C.
Once painted. Notice the unnatural schematic arrangement of the hands.



An Egyptian Grave Monument of the First Intermediate Period

by Dows Dunham, *Associate Curator at the
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*

THE Egyptian grave monument published in this issue of the *Bulletin* finds a proper place in a collection covering the development of the arts through the ages, for it represents a phase in Egyptian funerary art not often emphasized, yet of considerable significance.

The classic age of Egyptian culture known as the Old Kingdom—the age which produced the Pyramids, the Sphinx, and the great statues and reliefs of the Fourth to the Sixth Dynasties—was the period when organized government on a truly national scale made its first appearance in the ancient world. With the end of the Sixth Dynasty, economic and social weaknesses in the structure of this society led to a collapse of centralized authority, to a consequent degradation in the cultural level, and to a deterioration in both quality and quantity of artistic production which lasted for several centuries. It was not until a degree of social order was reestablished in the Twelfth Dynasty that Egypt once more provided the conditions of life which made possible an artistic production worthy of comparison with the great works of the Old Kingdom. Yet, despite the centuries of collapse, the awakening, when at last it came, was essentially a revival of the old traditional forms used to carry out the same practical purposes which had been the inspiration of the artists and craftsmen of the Pyramid Age. How had these old traditions survived through the long interval of darkness to be reborn with the return of favorable conditions? It was in part through the medium of such grave monuments as the one under discussion that old methods of work and habits of representation were preserved. Objects of this nature form the tenuous link connecting the old with the new through the Dark Ages of Egypt's history.

During the Seventh to the Tenth Dynasties, which we call the First Intermediate Period, people still required tombs when they died, still desired the material representation in sculpture and relief of the provisions necessary to their welfare in the next world. The rich and powerful nobles of the Pyramid Age had provided themselves with these necessities through the medium of the statues and reliefs of their monumental tombs at Giza and Sakkara, employing the skilled artists and craftsmen trained in the royal workshops of Pharaoh. In the First Intermediate Period the poverty-stricken local gentry up and down the Nile Valley sought, with the means at their disposal, to make similar provision for their life after death. But the great centres of artistic skill were no more, and it was only upon the local stone-cutters' efforts that they could rely. Grave stones or stelae such as these are, in fact, condensations of the most important elements in the tomb reliefs of the Old Kingdom. The figure of the owner of the tomb was essential, although we can hardly expect to find a faithful likeness of the person represented. The second pictorial element, and one only less important than the figure, was the group of food offerings: the traditional table bearing loaves of bread—now so conventionalized as to be hardly



Grave stone (stele) of Count Heny. Painted limestone relief, probably Upper Egypt. c. 2200 B. C.

recognizable—and the piles of meat, drink, vegetables, and fruit necessary to the diet of the deceased in the next world. Third comes the magic value of the inscriptions, the mere writing of which ensured to the dead man the benefits invoked in them. In all the variety of the reliefs so plentifully provided in the great tombs of the Pyramid Age these three were the really essential elements. Poverty and limited artistic ability might put a stop to the provision of more elaborate safeguards for a man's future welfare, but these minimum benefits at least continued to be provided as long as there were men capable of carving them in stone or depicting them in paint.

Description of the Grave Monument.

At the left, extending to the full height of the stone within the framing border of colored rectangles, stands the figure of the owner, carved in relief and facing to the right. He wears a full wig, the curls of which are represented by incised squares, and a short chin beard. His jewelry consists of a broad bead collar and a pair of bracelets, also presumably of beadwork. He is clothed in a short white kilt and wears a panther skin, the tail of which hangs down between his legs. In his left hand he carries a long staff and in his right holds the wand *hrp*, a badge of rank and authority. The color of the figure is in

part preserved. The wig is black and the flesh a reddish brown, the normal conventionalization for men. The jewelry at neck and wrists has lost all color, but, judging by better preserved examples, was no doubt blue and green. The panther skin is a uniform yellow but was probably once painted with brown spots which have now disappeared.

To the right below the inscriptions are groups of food offerings in relief. Reading from left to right these may be described as follows:—a stone table, painted in red and white blotches to imitate red granite, and on this conventionalized loaves of bread¹ painted brown. To the right of the foregoing, in order vertically and to the right, are a conical loaf (brown), a bunch of onions (green), an indeterminate object (brown), a fore-leg of meat (red), a table (uncolored) on which stand two basins (brown) and two loaves? (red). Beneath the table stand a ewer (uncolored) and basin (red) for washing the hands. To the right again, among various indeterminate objects colored green (vegetables?) and brown (loaves?), the following can be recognized: onions or leeks (green), a bunch of lettuce (green), a dead bird, a basket (yellow), two pottery jars (red) with mud sealings (formerly black) on stands, between which is a bunch of vegetables, a dressed fowl, and more loaves and vegetables or fruits. Many of the objects are too ill-defined to be even tentatively identified, but there is no doubt that all represent food supplies of one sort or another.

The inscriptions fill the upper part of the field to the right and are divided into three groups A-C. All are sunk below the surface of the stone in contrast to the figure and food offerings which are in relief. The main inscription (A) fills three lines at the top, reading from right to left, and colored uniformly by lines green, blue and green. This inscription gives the normal simple offering formula, followed by titles and name of the owner. Next comes a line of hieroglyphs (B), painted blue and on a smaller scale than the main text. It specifies the kind and quantity of offerings desired and again gives titles and name of the deceased. Finally there is a short line of inscription (C), without preserved coloring, which is devoted to laudatory epithets applied to the owner. In translation the inscriptions read as follows:

- A. 1) An offering which the king gives, (and) Anubis upon his mountain, who is in the place of embalming, lord of the necropolis, 2) in all his beautiful places; funerary offerings of bread and beer for the beautiful (one), 3) the Count, Sole Companion, the honored *Heny*.
- B. A thousand bread, a thousand beer, a thousand fowls, a thousand cattle, a thousand of everything good for the Count, Chancellor of the King of Lower Egypt, the honored *Heny*.
- C. Beloved of his father, praised of his mother, ruler of their house.

This monument is said to have been found at the pyramid of King Pepi II at Sakkara, and to date from the Sixth Dynasty. On stylistic grounds alone both these statements seem improbable. The writer assisted Professor Jéquier during part of his excavations in the neighborhood of the Pepi pyramid for the Egyptian Government, is familiar with the site, and has studied the publications of the work done there in recent years. To the best of his knowledge no stelae of this character have ever been reported from the site.

1. By the Intermediate Period the representation of the loaves has become so conventional as to be quite unrecognizable. For a discussion of the evolution of these objects see the writer's *Naga-ed-Der Stelae of the First Intermediate Period*, Oxford, 1937, page 12, note 1.

Furthermore the material of which the monument is made is very different from the Tura limestones employed at Giza and Sakkara. Comparison under the microscope shows that the stone is of much finer grain, practically identical with samples from Naga-ed-Dêr in Upper Egypt. A comparison with the grave stones from this latter site, published by the writer in 1937, shows a distinct stylistic resemblance. In particular the form and cutting of the hieroglyphs is practically identical with the work on Nos. 10 and 22 in that publication. Although definite evidence is not to be had, the writer ventures to express the opinion that this monument is of Upper Egyptian origin, perhaps from the district of Naga-ed-Dêr, and that it should be dated to the first half of the first Intermediate Period.

The Mummy of Nes-min

by Miriam A. Banks

A MUMMY of a priest and prophet of the gods Min and Khonsu at Apu, by name Nes-min, together with its elaborately painted wooden coffin, has recently been acquired by the Museum. It was found at Akhmim, by the Greeks called Panopolis, by the Egyptians, Apu, in Upper Egypt, more than fifty years ago, and was once numbered among the Egyptian antiquities belonging to Lady Meux of Theobald's Park, and later formed part of the Hearst collection. It dates from the early Ptolemaic Period, i.e., about 300 B. C. (Ill. p. 22.)

Mummification of the dead was practised by the ancient Egyptians for more than thirty centuries. Many peoples have hungered after life everlasting but none have reached out for it with such intensity and persistence as the people who dwelt on the banks of the Nile. Realizing that while anything kept its form it persisted, they cherished the belief that if they could preserve the human form, they could insure the continued existence of the personality that had animated it in its earthly existence.

In pre-dynastic times, the hot rainless climate was responsible for the natural preservation of bodies buried in the sand. With flexed limbs, in the contracted position in which as an embryo it had huddled in the womb, the body after death was bundled in a cloth or matting and consigned to the hot sand, and there achieved a desiccated permanence. So buried, however, it was not safe from the accident of shifting sands or predatory desert jackals, and entombment presented itself as a natural safeguard. The entombed body had to be artificially preserved from inevitable decomposition, and hence the ancient Egyptians developed the science of mummification.

When it became clear that life had departed, the body was given by sorrowing kinsfolk into the hands of priestly embalmers to be made as incorruptible as human means could



devise. The actual processes of mummification differed from age to age, differed even contemporaneously according to the importance of the deceased, since some processes were more costly than others. Our knowledge of these processes is attained through study of extant mummies and the writings of observant Greeks like Herodotus.

The chief differences of method were concerned with the removal of the corruptible entrails and the packing of the eviscerated body. In the most elaborate and costly method, the viscera were removed through an incision in the left side, and when the science of mummification was fully developed, the brain was hooked out through the nostrils. The heart, regarded as the seat of the mind and the good emotions, was left *in situ*. Thus were the bodies of the Pharaohs and other great personages treated. The internal organs of persons of less importance were removed by an injection of cedar oil, which left in the body for a sufficient length of time, reduced all but the bones and skin to fluid; and sometimes not even that trouble was taken, but the interior of the cadaver was simply washed out with a purgative. In all cases, the body was soaked for many days in a bath of natron, a natural soda found in several different localities in Egypt, packed with spices, resin-soaked linen or other material among which small amulets were distributed as magic preservatives, and then wrapped with gummed bandages more or less elaborately wound. The embalming process occupied at least seventy days.

This lengthy process of mummification was carried out in accordance with priestly ritual, with prescribed anointings and lustrations and many incantations. The central

Painted case of the mummy of Nes-Min, Priest of Akhmim. Upper Egypt. Ptolemaic period. (332-30 B. C.)

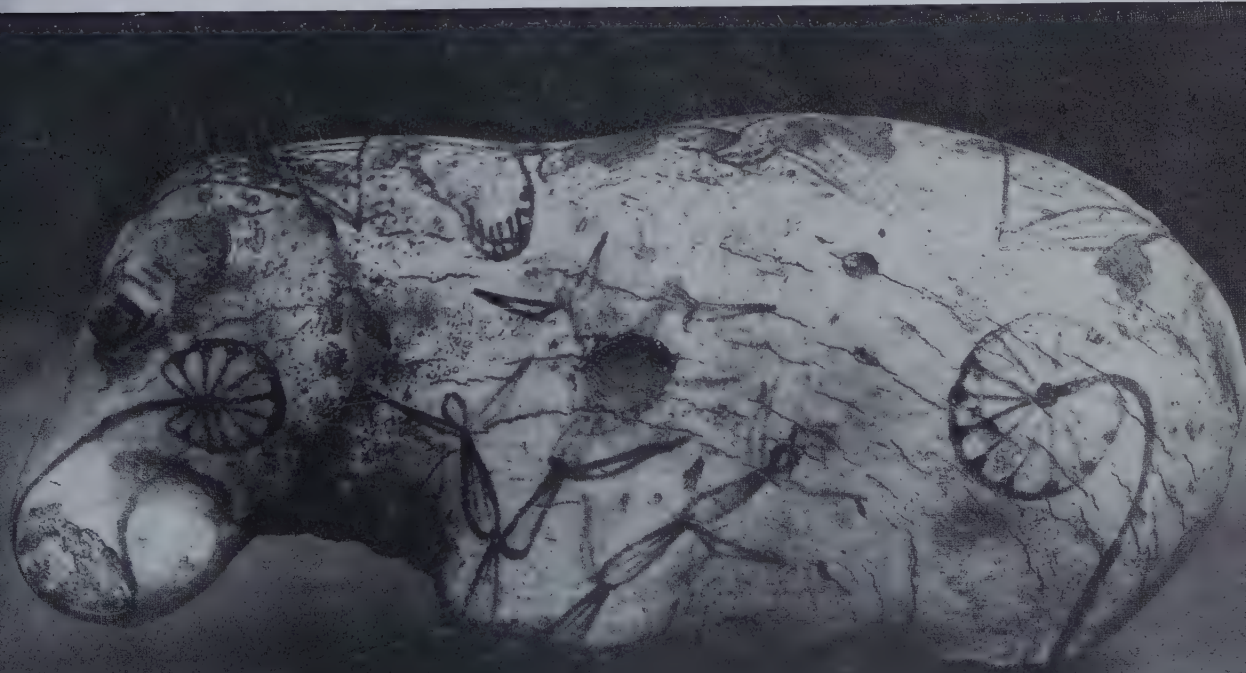
dogma of the Egyptian belief in the everlasting Life was the identification of the dead person with Osiris, the god of the underworld and judge of the dead. According to legend, Osiris was treacherously slain and dismembered by his brother Set; Isis, his wife, gathered up his limbs and reverently buried them. The whole system of Egyptian embalming and burial was considered symbolical of this divine adventure.

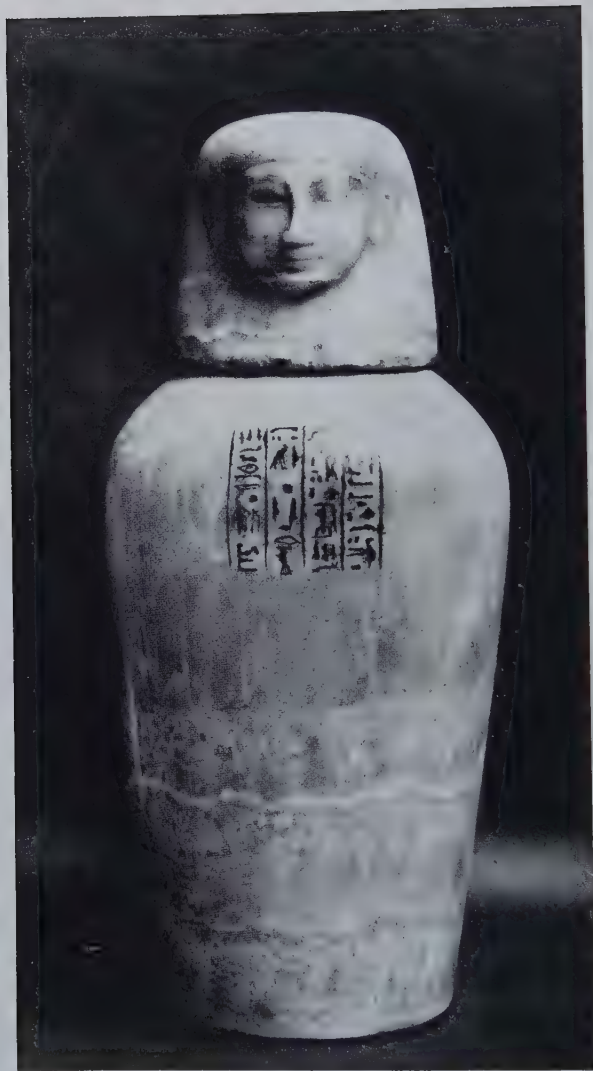
Our word "mummy" comes from the Arabic and means "a body preserved by bitumen," since bitumen was the preservative used on the late dynastic mummies with which the Arabs were familiar. The Egyptian word for mummification was *ges*, "to bandage a dead body." On the mummy of Nes-min the black bitumen, or pitch, may be clearly seen where the outer bandages are broken. The mummy, however, is very well-preserved. A painted and gilded cartonnage collar and cutwork pectoral ornament the front, with a painted hieroglyphic inscription down the center giving the name, titles, and genealogy of the deceased. According to E. A. Wallis Budge, who catalogued it when it belonged to Lady Meux, the mummy originally had a small hematite scarab on its breast and on the head was a gilded cartonnage mask. The cartonnage mask was presented to the British Museum in 1885; the scarab's whereabouts is unknown.

When everything had been done to insure the preservation of the body, it was natural to put it in a coffin of some sort before depositing it in the tomb. The early coffins were wooden boxes, often decorated to represent a house. However, by the middle of the 2nd millennium B. C., the coffin followed the shape of the mummy, and as time went on was more and more elaborately decorated, until in the Ptolemaic Period, to which our mummy of Nes-min belongs, it was entirely covered with religious symbols and inscriptions.

The complex pattern of deities and hieroglyphics with which the mummy case of

Hippopotamus, faience, from a grave of the XI Dynasty (2100-2000 B. C.).



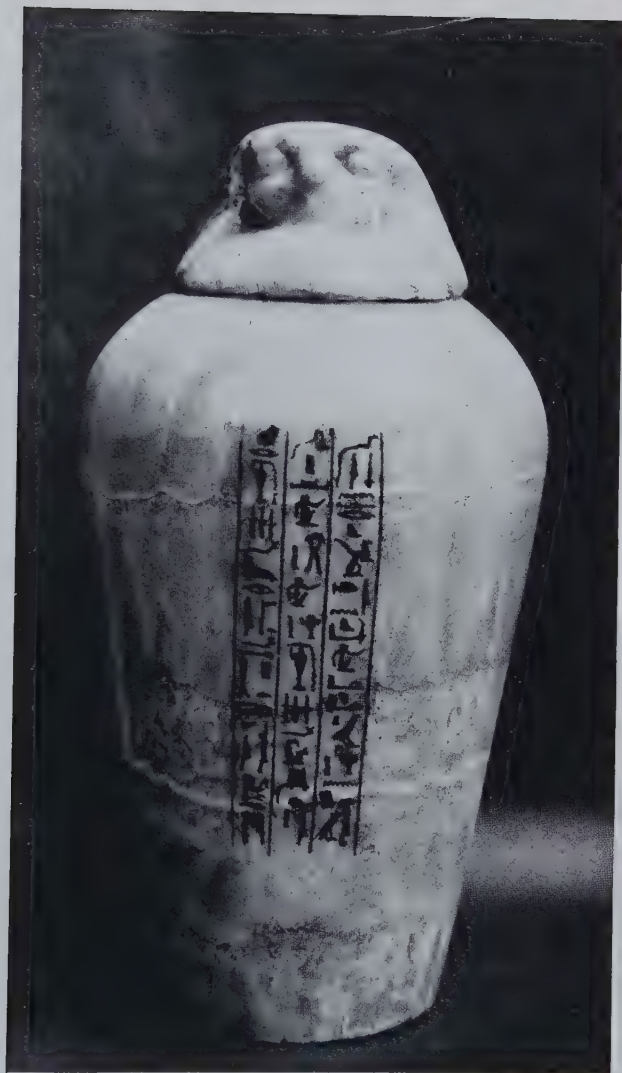


One of the four "Canopic" jars containing the viscera of the mummified dead. The lids are in the shape of the four children of Horus. This lid represents the human-headed Amseth, who presided over the liver.

Nes-min is covered was not bestowed upon it as decoration, but rather as protective magic. Not only must Nes-min's body be preserved, but his identity must be maintained; and over and over again on the mummy case we read his name, his titles, his genealogy. Moreover, he must be identified with Osiris, and thus over and over such identification is proclaimed and the gods associated with Osiris invoked with profoundly moving prayers.

To the magic of the written word is added the magic of the pictured gods. Thus Nut, mother of Osiris, goddess of heaven, spreads her winged arms protectingly above the deceased lying on his lioness bier while his soul hovers above him in the form of a

"Canopic" jar with lid representing the falcon-headed son of Horus, Quebhsennuf, who presided over the stomach. Alabaster. Ptolemaic period. (332-30 B. C.)



human-headed bird. Gods and goddesses surround him and the sixteen lines of hieroglyphics relating the titles and genealogy of Nes-min identify him.

Nes-min was a priest, of a long line of priests who served the god Min, the Egyptian equivalent of the Greek Pan. He was also a prophet of the god Khonsu, a deity in whom some have found an Egyptian counterpart of Hercules. Nes-min was an ecclesiastic of high rank, holding the office of *seutcheb* or "Sacrificial Priest." His mother was a *sistrum*-bearer, or one who shook a ceremonial rattle in the temple ritual. Some sort of temple service was customary for Egyptian ladies from the period of the New Empire onward. The queen, wife of the Pharaoh, set the example. She was regarded as the heavenly



Sailboat with crew for the use of the deceased. From a grave.

consort of the god, and lesser ladies held various ranks in the mystical harem.

Nes-min lived to a good age, performing his sacred duties in the temple at Apu, the main seat of the worship of Min. He died, and his mummified body in its painted coffin was carried to its tomb in the vast cemetery at the foot of the hills that bordered the Eastern Desert, and there it rested for many centuries until the rude hands of a plundering Arab routed it from its hiding place.

An Egyptian mummy is something more than a curiosity, and the natural interest evoked by the spectacle of a human body amazingly preserved over millenniums of time is overshadowed by its significance as a symbol. For a mummy is the springboard for that profound and incalculably influential culture of ancient Egypt whose force is not yet spent. It is concrete evidence of the Idea which motivated Egyptian art.

To insure the safe-keeping of the carefully embalmed body, tombs were built; to further the welfare of the deceased by prayers and offerings, temples were erected; and thus was created the monumental architecture of the Nile valley.

The Egyptians believed that when life left the body, a double, of the same form as the body but of more ethereal substance, survived. This double, or *Ka*, needed a material lodging, and since even in the tomb a mummy might meet with disaster, the portrait statue was carved from wood or stone as a substitute. Our XI Dynasty wooden head of a prince is from such a figure (Ill. p. 12). It is beautifully modeled and unmistakably a portrait. Since there could be only one mummy, but nothing prevented the carving of many statues, the multiplication of *Ka* figures was inevitable. Here was a compelling motive for the sculptor's art. In fact, the Egyptian word for sculptor was "he who causes to live."

With the magical purpose of providing a happy life for the deceased by the picturization of such a life upon the walls of his tomb, there developed eventually those wonderful gaily painted low relief carvings that, zone above zone, may be seen in the mastaba tombs

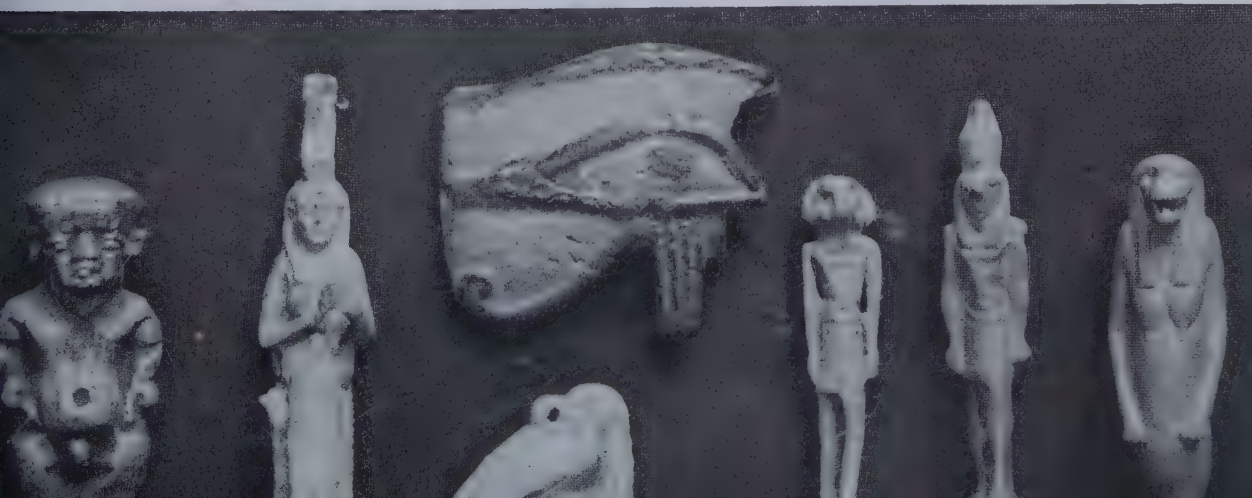
of the Old Empire. In one sense, they may be thought of as mural paintings, the slight relief merely heightening the reality, and so we may claim that the third great division of the fine arts, painting, was also motivated by the dream of the Everlasting Life.

A relief in red granite from the inner wall of an Egyptian temple of the 4th century B. C., showing a king making an offering, has long been an outstanding item in the Museum collection (Ill. p. 17). Carved in low relief is the figure of Nekhthorheb, the last king of the XXX Dynasty, standing with a sistrum in his right hand and an offering in his left. He wears the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt with the royal uraeus. There is a band of hieroglyphics in the lower right hand corner of the relief, but breaks in the inscription interfere with decipherment.

In order that the *Ka*, or double, might be surrounded by familiar things, that the deceased might know no want in the After World, the tomb chambers were filled with objects which the departed had been accustomed to use in his life on earth. Beds, chairs, cabinets, jewelry, weapons, trappings of ceremony and luxurious living, toilet articles, vessels of pottery, stone or glass for every human necessity were crowded into the tombs and sealed, as it was believed, for eternity. Thus the great museum at Cairo, the Egyptian rooms in the British Museum, the Louvre and the Berlin Museum, contain but the loot of tombs. To come nearer home, this is true also of the Egyptian rooms in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, in our own Museum in Providence. Had the ancient Egyptians not believed fervently in a life after death, a life similar to the earthly life, not one of the objects in our Egyptian collection would be here today.

Some of the objects in the Museum's collection may be classed as mummy accessories. This is true of the two alabaster "Canopic" jars, (Ill. pp. 24, 25) one with a lid in the shape of a human head, the other the head of a hawk. Into jars such as these were placed the viscera after they were extracted from the body and mummified. Into the jar with the human-headed lid went the liver, into that with the hawk's head, the intestines. There were two other jars in a set, one with jackal-headed lid to contain the stomach, and one with the head of an ape to receive the lungs. Standing in a row beneath the mummy on its bier painted on our mummy case of Nes-min may be seen a set of such jars. The different lids represent the deities known as the four sons of Horus, protectors of the special organs. Hieroglyphic inscriptions down the front of the jars are extracts from the

Amulets, representing Ptah, Isis nursing the Horus child, the sacred eye, Ibis, Amon, Horus and Taouris.





Ushabtis (or "answerers"), which served as servants to the deceased. Faience figurines.

text of the "Book of the Dead," as the funerary papyri inscribed with prayers and spells which were enclosed with the mummy is called.

Many spells in the "Book of the Dead" are concerned with amulets and direct upon what part of the body they shall be placed. Amulets were used by the Egyptians even in prehistoric days. They are found on mummies of all periods but in greatest profusion in the Saite era. They were tied to the neck, the arms, the legs and placed within the mummy bandages. In the Museum collection are some forty-two amulets, (Ill. p. 27) the majority of faience glazed green or blue, while a few are of hard stone. They are little figures of Egyptian gods, such as Horus, Isis, Isis nursing Horus, Bes, Taouris, or Thoth, or symbols such as the *uzat* or Sacred Eye.

On the breast of the mummy, over the heart, was placed a scarab, or stylized representation of the scarabaeid beetle which the ancient Egyptians considered a symbol of resurrection. It was the emblem of the god Khepera who typifies the moment when the night turns into dawn of day. Such a scarab, now lost, was found on the mummy of

Nes-min. In our Museum collection is a very fine New Empire heart scarab of steatite. On its face is an account of a lion hunt of Amen-Hotep III. Two large clean-cut hematite scarabs date from the Ptolemaic Period. Small scarabs are frequently found strung together like beads. These are pierced from end to end. Ten small pierced scarabs of this kind, nine of steatite and one of amethyst quartz, are included in the collection.

Sufficient pains had not been expended upon the welfare of the honored dead even when the body had been embalmed in accordance with every rule, when *Ka* statues had been made and the tomb filled with furniture and food such as the deceased had been used to in his daily life. Servants and properties to which he had been accustomed must accompany him to insure a happy existence in the Fields of the Blessed. This other world was believed by the ancient Egyptians to be very much like Egypt, where ploughing and sowing and reaping went on much as it did on the banks of the Nile. Therefore in the tomb were placed little wooden models of workmen and servants engaged in every conceivable task, butchers in the slaughter-house, cooks in the kitchen, weavers in the weave shop. Not only comforts, but pleasures were remembered. Often the model of a sailboat with its crew, such as the boat in the Museum collection, (Ill. p. 26) would be placed near the coffin so that the deceased might travel from place to place in the Netherworld. Many of these little wooden figures were of crude workmanship, merely symbols that were humane substitution for the cruel slaughter of dependents that in pre-dynastic days followed the death of a great personage. However, the *figure of a priest*, standing with left foot advanced, and wearing a stiff white kilt, is beautifully modeled. It dates from the XII Dynasty (Ill. p. 14).

Besides these models of busy servitors, the tomb of a wealthy Egyptian contained many small mummiform figures known as *ushabti*, (Ill. p. 28) or "Answerers," which served as heavenly bondservants. They were made of various materials, but most frequently of faience, and were inscribed with the name of the deceased. If the latter were called upon to do something disagreeable to him, these little figures would answer for him and perform the irksome task. Of the twenty-four *ushabti* figures in the Museum collection, twenty are of faience, three of limestone and one of painted wood.

One of the most interesting objects in our collection is the small faience figure of a hippopotamus from a XI Dynasty tomb (Ill. p. 23). It is coated with a brilliant turquoise glaze with a linear decoration of aquatic plants, a bird and a butterfly in deep manganese, reminiscent of the tropical flora and fauna of his familiar habitat. A similar figure has an honored place in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and there is another such figure in the Louvre.

From ancient texts we learn that bronze was used in Egypt before the Pyramid Age

Ivory spoon handle in form of a swimming girl. Old Kingdom (3200-2270).





and bronze objects dating from the end of the Old Empire may be seen the Egyptian collections of the great museums. The oldest bronze object in our collection is a ceremonial knife that was found in a grave at Thebes. (Ill. p. 30.) The bronze blade has forked ridges down the center, and the bronze handle has applied ebony at the incurved sides and a flattened ivory ovoid showing traces of painted design at the pommel. It dates from the XIV Dynasty.

We may safely assume that bronze was used for weapons and household utensils long before it was employed by sculptors in the making of figures. All the bronze objects in the Museum collection, save the ceremonial knife mentioned above, date from the Ptolemaic Period. There are a number of small funerary figures of deities, such as Osiris with crook and flagellum, Bast with Hathor shield, Isis, and various representations of the god Horus. Also, there is a small seated cat with a collar decorated with incised zigzags and its ears pierced for ear rings.

A larger figure, a seated bronze Horus, (Ill. p. 15) is a recent acquisition. The god is represented with hawk head and wears the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt and the royal uraeus. He sits with arms resting on lap, the right hand clenched to grip something, the left hand with open palm, fingers pointing straight ahead. His only raiment is a fluted knee-length skirt proper to a king. The pedestal or block upon which Horus sits is decorated with faintly incised designs among which may be discerned a hawk grasping a symbolic feather of truth in each claw, and a seated Horus with Isis or Nephthys standing behind him.

Ceremonial knife, from the XIVth Dynasty, (after 1700 B. C.). Blade and handle of bronze. Bronze was introduced into Egypt shortly after 3000 B. C. Flint tools were no longer used. The IVth Dynasty marks the end of the Neolithic and the beginning of the Bronze Age in Egypt.

The Coffin of Nes-Min

THE coffin of the priest Nes-min has been most carefully described and its inscriptions translated by the late Sir E. A. Wallis Budge of the British Museum in his catalogue of the Egyptian antiquities belonging to Lady Meux. From this catalogue the following detailed description of the coffin is taken, with certain corrections made by Mr. Dows Dunham, Associate Curator of Egyptian Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and with frequent abridgments and interpolations:

The painted wooden coffin of Nes-min is in the form of a mummy standing on a pedestal and is a fine example of coffin manufacture. It is decorated with a number of scenes and inscriptions, the greatest part upon a light yellow ground. The designs are characterized by great freedom and boldness, and the accurate drawing of many of them calls to mind the finest Theban work of the XVIII and XIX Dynasty. The hieroglyphics have, at times, almost a cursive form, and the greater number of them are traced in outline.

The headdress is painted a dark green, the face and ears are gilded and the eyelids and eyebrows are inlaid with that kind of blue glass which is characteristic of the period subsequent to the XXVI Dynasty. Over the forehead is painted a beetle, the wings of which are extended, and they bend down round the sides of the face; above the beetle is the character *shen*, the emblem of the circuit of the sun, or eternity. The beard was broken by the Arabs, but it has been repaired.

Hanging from a fretted bar intended to represent inlaid work, a semicircular breast ornament, or pectoral, painted to imitate rows of lotus and other flowers, and pointed pendants, decorates the chest. From each end of the bar rises a head of the hawk of Horus, the god of day and son of Osiris, surmounted by a sun-disk painted red and a *uraeus*, or representation of the sacred asp.

At the center of Nes-min's coffin, immediately beneath the pectoral, is pictured Nut, goddess of the heavens and mother of Osiris. (Ill. p. 33.) She is kneeling with outstretched wings and arms, and wears a disk upon her head. In each hand she holds an ostrich feather, symbol of truth.

On either side is the *uzat*, or eye, one the emblem of the Sun, the other of the Moon, and beneath each eye, the ram of Mendes wearing horns, disk and plumes, standing upon a support; and the emblems of the East and West.

Arranged in perpendicular lines over the left breast of the coffin is an inscription which informs us that the deceased, Nes-min, held the dignity of "Sacrificial Priest" and also that he was the second priest of the god Min. From other texts on the coffin we learn that he was also a priest of Khonsu. His father, grandfather and greatgrandfather had held the same rank and performed the same duties in the temple of Min. The inscription is an address to the goddess Mer-sekhet, a form of Hathor. "Hail, O mighty one in heaven, daughter of Ra, turner back of the Fiend, mistress of wrath," etc., etc., "who maketh protection for her brother with breath and food, and who maketh his body to become young again every thirtieth day, make thou protection for Osiris, the sacrificial priest, the second priest of Min, Nes-min, triumphant. . . . May his limbs be gathered together for him, may his body be again knit together for him, and may he be victorious over his enemies. Come thou, and grant that his soul may be mighty in

his body, do thou overthrow for him all his enemies, . . . let them never rise up against him, let them never come against him to attack him."

Arranged in perpendicular lines over the right breast of the coffin is an inscription which runs: "Behold Osiris, the sacrificial priest, the second prophet of Min, the prophet of Khonsu, Nes-min, triumphant. . . . Stand thou up, Horus grant that thou mayest stand up. May the god Seb grant that he may see his father in thee, in thy name of 'Prince of the Temple.' May Horus grant to thee . . . all the gods, may he make thee to ascend to them, and may they make brilliant thy face. Horus hath given to thee thy two eyes that thou mayest see with them. Horus hath given to thee thy enemies beneath thee, and he hath raised thee up there. Through him thou shalt never be cast down. Come thou to thy place for the gods have knit thy body together."

Below, separated from the kneeling figure of Nut by a band of inscription, the deceased is shown lying on his bier, a lioness couch, while above him hovers his soul in the form of a human-headed bird, having its wings extended and holding "shen," the emblem of the circuit of the sun, in each claw. The human-headed bird is the *ba*-bird, or representation of the soul. At death the *ba* flew away to the land of the blest. It might, however, return to the body from time to time, just so long as the mummified body, or its ghostly double, the *ka*, or portrait statue, survived. Beneath the bier stand four jars which contain the viscera. These are known as the "Canopic" jars, and the lids were in the shape of the heads of the four children of Horus, namely, the falcon-headed Qebhsennuf, the jackal-headed Duamautef, the ape-headed Hapi, and the human-headed Amseth, and the stomach, the intestines, the lungs and the liver were placed in the jar identified with the deity who presided over the respective organs.

To the right, at the head of the bier, kneels the goddess, Nephthys, the wife of Set, the slayer of Osiris, with her right hand raised to her face. An inscription reads, "Behold Nephthys, she saith 'Boy beautiful, come to thy house. Let thy heart be glad, for exist not thy enemies. Thy two sisters are near thee to protect thy bier and to invoke thee with weeping.'"

Behind her stand two of the children of Horus, Hapi and Duamautef, making protection for Osiris.

At the foot of the bier kneels the goddess Isis with her left hand to her face; with the inscription: "Here is Isis, she saith, 'Come to thy house, twice, Ani! Come to thy house, exist not thy enemies. Boy beautiful, come, let see thee thy sister, depart thou not from me. Hail, boy beautiful, come to thy house.'"

Behind Isis stand Amseth, who says, "I am thy son, Osiris," and Qebhsennuf, who "maketh protection for Osiris."

Below this division is an inscription written in horizontal lines down the centre of the cover, which reads "Here is Osiris, the sacrificial priest, the second prophet of Min, the prophet of Khonsu, Nes-min, triumphant," relates his ancestry to the fourth generation, and continues, "Hail ye souls! Hail slaughterer of shadows! Hail ye gods all those princes of life! I pray bring ye the soul of Osiris, the sacrificial priest, the priest second, Nes-min, in triumph to him. May he unite with his body according to his heart's desire," etc.

The four perpendicular lines of inscription contain a speech of the god Khepera, and read: "Here is Khepera, who created himself, . . . Saith he, 'Come to thy house,



Osiris, the sacrificial priest, the prophet second of Min, Nes-min. . . . Ra extendeth himself over thee, thou art strengthened, thou art protected, it is granted that he shall protect thee. May there be given to thee winds coming forth from Shu, and wind coming forth from divine Tmu upon thy coffin! May there be given to thee water coming forth from the Nile, O Osiris, the sacrificial priest, the prophet second, Nes-min. May there be given to thee dilatation with boldness of heart in the Elysian Fields. Thy heart shall be to thee and shall not depart. Protecteth thee the god Tanen, O son of the cycle of his gods, and thou shalt come forth with splendour."

On the right hand of the horizontal inscription are figures of the gods Harmachis, Geb, and Horus, who "maketh protection for Nes-min." The first holds a crook and whip, and the second and third a whip only. On the left hand are figures of the gods Atum, Khepera and Osiris, each holding a whip. They also "make protection for Nes-min."

Four perpendicular lines of hieroglyphics on the left hand side of the cover present the 30th chapter of the Book of the Dead.

Over the feet of the cover are painted two pylon-shaped shrines emblematic of Ro-setau, the "passages of the tomb"; upon each side sits Anubis, the god of the dead, inscribed on the right, "Behold Anubis, lord of the sarcophagus, making the protection of Osiris," and on the left, "Behold, Anubis, president of the divine house, making the protection of Osiris."

On each side of the feet is a lion; the name of the one is *Sef*, "Yesterday," and that of the other *Thau*, "Tomorrow."

On the front and sides of the pedestal are lines of inscription with prayers that echo or repeat those already presented on other portions of the coffin and the enumerated titles and genealogy of Nes-min.

On the outside of the coffin under the feet (see p. 35) are ten perpendicular lines of hieroglyphics with the usual identification of the deceased with Osiris and the petitionary prayer, "may the goddess Sept give her two hands to receive thee, may thy mother Nut not depart from thee in the name of her. Mayest thou rest in Nut thy mother every day! Mayest thou come forth, and mayest thou walk forever. May thy lord not repulse thee at the doors of the underworld . . . and mayest thou walk there, Osiris, Nes-min, triumphant!" Below the inscription is a black and white bull bearing the mummy of the deceased on his journey to the afterworld upon its back and below this are four lines of hieroglyphics containing prayers for sepulchral offerings.

On the inside of the cover are painted in outline:

1. The winged disk with pendant *uraei*, emblematic of Ra and Isis and Nephthys.
2. The vulture, emblematic of the goddess Nut, holding in its claws *shen*, emblematic of the circuit of the Sun, and the feather emblematic of Right and Truth.
3. The winged *scarabaeus*, emblematic of the matter of the dead body of the deceased about to come into a new existence.
4. The vulture of Nut as described above.

On the inside of the lower portion of the cover is a full-length figure of the goddess Nut drawn in black outline, and on the back is a large figure of *tet*, wearing plumes and horns, emblematic of the god Osiris. Down the edge on each side is a line of inscription in which a full genealogy of Nes-min is given.



Foot of the coffin of the mummy of Nes-Min. (See page 22.) Representing the bull bearing the mummy to the Afterworld.

Report on X-Ray Films of Egyptian Mummy

by Murray S. Danforth, M.D.

AN opportunity has been given to have X-rays taken of the mummy of Nes-min recently acquired by the Museum of Art. Fifteen X-rays were taken. The mummy is still in its wrappings and is of a man five feet, six and one-half inches tall.

The X-rays of the head show the bones well preserved with the usual markings of blood vessels in the skull wall very distinct. While there is an appearance suggesting some opaque substance filling the back of the skull chamber, no evidence of an opening into the skull can be made out. For the most part the teeth are well preserved except for apparent wear on the biting surface as if ground down by hard food or possibly grit in the food. Some of the teeth seem loose, probably from pyorrhoeal absorption and in at least one instance a tooth looks almost free in its socket. The shape of the skull is normal. No explanation can be made so far for the vertical line inside of the skull.

The bones in the neck are intact so far they can be seen and none appears missing or displaced.

The chest is possibly flattened from above downward and backward so that the collar bones seem low at their front ends. The ribs are normal in outline and structure.

The spine shows advanced arthritic changes suggesting an old person (lipping at margins of bodies).

The arms are crossed on the chest with the hands outstretched and the tips of the fingers resting on the shoulders.

The pelvis is of the male type. The hip joints are clearly visible and show no very definite arthritic change. There is enough decalcification so that the bone structure is clear and curiously gives an appearance somewhat similar to that seen in growing bones of adolescence but actually such an appearance is not infrequently seen in X-rays of old people.

The lower extremities are normal in outline with normal structure or possibly with a slight knock-knee condition. The knee joints are about as those seen in people of fifty or sixty years of age. The ankle joints are normal in structure.

The feet are those of a person whose toes have not been crowded by narrow shoes.

The covering or cartonnage is rather dense in places but obscures very little of the bone details.

Preliminary Report on X-ray Films of Egyptian Mummy, Nes-min

Dr. Isaac Gerber and Dr. James F. Boyd have kindly gone over the films and have given the details from a Roentgenological point of view.

Skull: The Calvarium generally seems to be normal in size and shape. No definite abnormalities are seen in the flat bones. The cranial cavity appears to be filled with

material showing levels probably due to solidification with the mummy in the horizontal position. The bones in the base of the skull seem normal anteriorly. The sella tursica is clearly seen, apparently normal.

The paranasal sinus system is clearly demonstrated. The density in the left maxillary antrum suggests possibly old disease. The nasal septum shows some deviation to the left.

The jaws show extensive pyorrhoal decalcification, especially around the sockets of the posterior teeth in the upper jaw. There is no definite evidence of attrition of the teeth. Several scattered necrotic root fragments are visible.

Spine: The mid-dorsal region shows moderate deformity of the vertebral bodies with considerable osteophyte formation, particularly on the right side where there is definite bridging. There is a slight degree of lateral scoliosis.

The lumbar spine shows extensive deformity of the bodies with marked osteophyte formation laterally, especially on the left side. Here also there is considerable bridging between adjacent bodies. The lower intervertebral discs seems considerably narrowed.

The pelvis and both hip joints show no abnormalities.

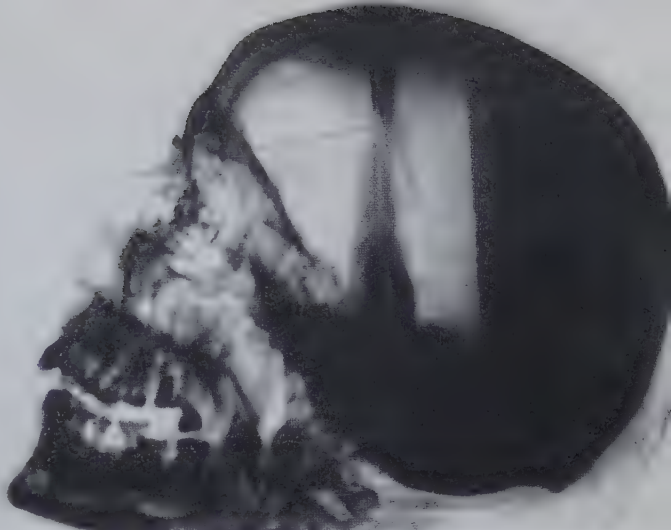
Long Bones: All the long bones show considerable decalcification, especially around the terminal portions. In these regions the zones of epiphyseal union are brought out quite clearly on account of the adjacent decalcification. Both forearms appear to be crossed over the breast. No definite pathology can be seen in either humerus, scapula or clavicle. The ribs seem negative.

The femur does not show any definite gross pathology on either side, except in the region of the knee joint.

Both knees show evidence of moderate degenerative arthritis. There is definite narrowing of the outer half of each joint space with slight spur formation at the edges of the involved bones. No other gross productive or destructive changes are seen.

The tibia and fibula seem normal on both sides.

The feet show a complete absence of the types of deformity we generally see in civilized people, due to shoe pressure. This is especially manifest in the absolutely straight long axis of the great toes. The interphalangeal articulations generally show slight narrowing, probably due to moderate degenerative arthritis.



X-Ray photograph of the head of the mummy of Nes-min

Jewelry of Old Egypt



by
Dorothy N. Casey

Pectoral ornament, gold and inlay, representing the ba-bird (soul-bird).

ALWAYS has man been interested in decorating his person. The fashion of the ancient Egyptians was no exception to this custom. Not only did they enjoy wearing precious metals wrought into necklaces, bracelets and anklets and beads of semi-precious stones, but they also buried fine pieces of jewelry with the dead. Many times this was made especially for funereal use, the bracelets and anklets but partially encircling the arms or ankles of the mummy, and elaborate beaded necklaces covering only the chest.

Gold was one of the first known metals in Egypt and it was found between the Nile Valley and the Red Sea. Its early use was discovered in tombs of the Predynastic Period. This precious metal may be found in two places—in the veins of quartz and in alluvial sands. Primitive people usually sought it in the latter places. Much of the fine metal was washed from gold-bearing rocks to the shores of the rivers, where the sand and gravel was separated from the metal. These tiny pieces were collected and made into ingots.

“The Egyptian method of extracting gold from the veins in quartz rock is described by Agartharchides, a Greek writer of the second century B. C., who visited the mines and wrote a detailed account of what he had seen. — The hardest of the rock was first cracked and broken by means of fire and then attacked by hand tools, which alone were used for the softer rock. The detached rock was then carried outside the mine, where it was crushed in large stone mortars to the size of peas and afterwards ground to fine powder in hand mills, this powder being then washed with water on a sloping surface in order to separate the metal, which was finally fused into small ingots.”¹

Gold was not refined until the sixth century B. C., for previous to this period we find various qualities of this metal. Pale gold is gold alloyed naturally with a small amount of silver suggesting the green gold used by modern jewelers. Electrum, also a natural mixture of gold and silver, is composed of approximately equal parts of gold and silver.

1. *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries*, by A. Lucas, page 186.

Alloys of gold in Egypt were silver, copper and iron. The ancient Egyptians were excellent workmen and were familiar with many of the modern methods of working this precious metal.

Hieroglyphs were used in Egypt as symbols to express written thoughts. Gold was used frequently for necklaces and because of this, a beaded one became the hieroglyph for gold.

The social position of the Egyptian jeweler, who generally inherited his vocation, was comparable to one held by a man in our own middle class. The workshops of most of the Egyptian craftsmen were in their own houses, but the goldsmiths used the palaces or temples as a safe place for their costly material. The workshop in the temple became known as the House of Gold.

The process of enameling was unknown in old Egypt. What to us resembles enamel has proved to be small pieces of glass cut to fit the cloisons or cells made on the surface of the piece to be decorated. The glass was rolled into small rods regulated in size by numerous applications of heat. These were then cut into small pieces to be inlaid and held in place probably by a kind of cement.

A fine example of this inlay is evident in the Egyptian ba bird, a pectoral ornament in the Museum Collection (Ill. p. 38). The ba or soul was represented by the body of a falcon bearing the head of a man. These pectoral pieces were made to be worn on the chest of both the living and the dead, although this one was without doubt a funerary piece, since it depicts the soul. The cloisons reveal fragments of slightly tinted blue glass separated by partitions of high quality gold soldered to the base. A dent on the head proves the goldwork forming the head and under part of the body to have been first stamped out and then worked into shape. In this piece, the legs are drawn close to the body. A very similar pectoral ornament is one in the New York Historical Society² and dated between the Twenty-sixth Dynasty and the Ptolemaic Period (661-30 B. C.). Semi-precious stones were used in this piece, where glass appears in our Museum ornament. However, there was not the difference in feeling between genuine stones and imitation ones in ancient Egypt that exists today.

The Scarabaeus, a beetle held sacred in Egypt was a symbol of Khepera, the god who was thought to be responsible for the movement of the sun. Immortality and the resurrection were signified by the scarab, often fashioned as an amulet to be worn for good luck. In our Museum Collection is a fine example of an amulet scarab of the Ptolemaic Period, so often confused with the seal type. (Ill. above.) The body is composed of a sheet



Amulet representing the scarabaeus. Gold and inlay.

2. *Catalogue of Egyptian Antiquities, Numbers 1-160, The New York Historical Society, page 172, plate XXVII.*

of gold, the front of the piece bent upward at right angles just back of the head. The forward section of the back has horizontal cloisons of gold filled with fitted pieces of blue glass, in color similar to lapis lazuli, so popular in Egypt. The surface is dull like that of the semi-precious stone of which it was an imitation. Vertical cloisons, similarly filled, complete the back section of the body. The head is apparently fashioned in two pieces—the top probably stamped from a die of sheet gold and perhaps mounted over a form, while the under section is a flat sheet of gold. A row of granules neatly conceals the seam of the head and body, beneath which, six serrated gold legs are visible. Attached to three flattened gold bands on the under side of the body is a coiled loop of wire for fastening the amulet to the wearer. The scarab is in good condition, although the glass is slightly pitted in places.

Bracelets were favorite pieces of jewelry among the ancient Egyptians. Not only were they worn on the forearm, but also above the elbow, and frequently two adorned each arm. Colored bands on the arms of figures in wall reliefs represent these pieces of jewelry—beaded ones, gold hoops and those of plaited chains.

An interesting gold bracelet of the Ptolemaic Period is in the collection of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich and now on loan at the Museum of Art. It is a flattened gold band with each end drawn into a heavy wire and twisted seven times around the opposite end for size adjustment. The wire at each end terminates in a tiny cone-shaped tip.

Another piece of gold jewelry also lent by Miss Aldrich is a necklace. It is wrought of plaited wire in four strands and closely resembles a bracelet of the Ptolemaic Period in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.³ The chain of the necklace is finished at each end with a fluted band, one terminating in a loop and the other in a hook. The cone-shaped pendant formed of flattened, twisted wire terminates in two small globules. Near the tip, gold seems to have collected between the wires, probably while soft, and gives the appearance of a molded drop. A solid disc of gold is soldered to the top of the pendant with the soldering concealed by a band of twisted gold. This type of necklace⁴ shows a strong similarity between the jewelry wrought in the workshops of the Ptolemies and those of the Roman Period, particularly in chainwork.

Although a small collection of gold jewelry, these pieces enable one to study the technique of jewelry making in the late periods of old Egypt.

3. Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Vol. XXX., No. 8, page 162.

4. *Arts and Crafts of Ancient Egypt*, by Petrie, page 95, fig. 109.

Before the Bible

. . a brief review

by *Adelaide M. Davidson*

IN THE BEGINNING . . . ? The authors of the books of Genesis and John and countless writers since have each had an answer, and each answer reveals the spirit of its time. Today we have no answer, and the problem itself has retreated before our vastly increased knowledge of the manifold character of natural and spiritual phenomena. Like the biologist who contents himself with investigating the evolution of a given animal form, disregarding the formal cause, so the historian is satisfied if he can trace through its complex manifestations the cyclical development of human thinking without concerning himself as an historian as to how and why it began.

Ancient historians did do so, however, and by so doing, have left to posterity a fascinating historical commentary. The version of the beginning of things which is most familiar to us is, of course, that of the account in Genesis. And it was a triumphant discovery during the first stages of excavation in Bible Lands that Genesis was, in fact, an historical document of sorts. Identification of people and places was a thrilling experience. Now, in the half century which has passed, the field of Near Eastern archaeology has become one involving a high degree of specialized study to which the discipline of Biblical exegesis is only incidental; yet, it should not be forgotten that without this impetus originally, the dusty clay pots and the baffling inscriptions might well have remained the darkly mysterious challenge to human ingenuity which the Mayan records are today.

The Genesis story of the separation of land and water seems to correspond to the actual process by which the Tigris-Euphrates Delta was formed. The brevity of the Genesis time interval between the creation of the land and human habitation upon it is likewise borne out by archaeological discoveries in that region. The swamps were literally but half dry when the first settlers laid the reed matting which composed the floors of their huts. And so civilization began.

Whence these settlers came cannot at present be ascertained, but so much is certain; they arrived in the Delta bringing a rudimentary pastoral culture which was quickly readapted to their new surroundings. Clay figurines indicate that women probably wore wigs as they did in Egypt, but the style of their pottery shows not Egyptian, but eastern affinities. Combined with this riddle is another. Were these the forerunners of the historical Sumerians?

In spite of many evidences of cultural continuity, there is some reason to suppose that these elements were adopted by incoming Sumerians rather than invented by them. The



Seal Impression from Jokha. Ur. IIIrd Dynasty, c. 2300 B. C. (cf. Gadd—History and Monuments of Ur. Pl. 18 (b)).

Bible says "the people journeyed from the East and came into the plain of Shinar and dwelt there." With them came certain innovations, the introduction of stonework and the building of temples on a "mountain" or ziggurat, which would seem to be an attempt to preserve an imitation of other conditions in another country. It is significant that this effort relates to that phase of culture which is always the most conservative.

The Sumerians, who are called "the blackheaded ones" in the texts, were a non-Semitic people who spoke a language like none other on earth. It abounds in monosyllabic words which are often homonyms. I believe that this circumstance is directly responsible for that discovery which was the greatest Sumerian contribution to history, the invention of writing.

Let us take the word "An." As a proper name it refers to Anu, the god of heaven, and, symbolically, the earliest pictographic sign was a "star." This star came to be used in connection with the name of every deity as a warning-sign, rather like the convention of capital letters which we use. An also meant "the sky" and the same sign was used again. Not unnaturally, it acquired the adjectival meaning "high." Add to this the fact that Sumerian polysyllabic words may be built up in part or wholly of a series of monosyllabic units as "E-an-na" which is literally, "House Heaven of," then it is clear that the transition to writing polysyllabic words in syllabic signs which thus lost their unitary pictographic character to retain only the sound value, is really an inevitable accident.

Prehistoric periods in Mesopotamia are called after the name of the site where the first or most abundant traces of them were found. Thus, the earliest delta settlements belong to the so-called al 'Ubaid period. This was followed by the Uruk and Jemdet Nasr periods, the latter of which is contemporary with the proto-dynastic period in Egypt. It is to this period that the earliest Sumerian writing belongs.

Of course, later Sumerian and Babylonian cuneiform and all its derivatives look very different from the original pictographs, so different, indeed, that the original sign is often unidentifiable. In some cases, particularly in seal cylinders, the archaic forms were consciously preserved. Close inspection of the first sign—the seal impression (Ill. p. 41, top right of photo, rows 2, 3, 4 from right to left) will show the survival of the picture of a recumbent man, a sign which is frequently used before proper names exactly as the sign for An before the names of deities. The seal with which this impression was made belongs to the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur (c. 2300 B. C.). Superimposed upon it is a note in every-day cuneiform.

The importance of the invention of writing cannot

Business document. Ur Dynasty, c. 2335 B. C.

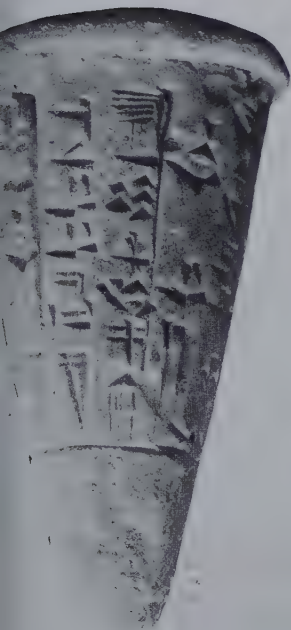


be over-estimated. It is a means of fixing the present (and in the medium which the Sumerians and their successors used, the word "fix" is almost synonymous with petrification) as it has also proven to be a means whereby not only the cumulative knowledge of the past has been preserved, but something of the personality of that past as well.

The economic and social factors which accompany the wide-spread use of writing change the entire character of the society which quickly comes to depend on it. Commerce may be carried on on a contractual basis. One tablet (III. p. 42) belongs to just this category of documents, for it records the renting out of two large temple farms with detailed specifications of expected production quoting the amount of the rental on a per cent basis. The date of the transaction is given as "the year when the city of Kimash was dealt evilly with." As we know this to have occurred in the 56th year of the reign of Dungi, King of Ur (c. 2390-2332 B. C.) an approximate dating of 2335 B. C. is readily secured.

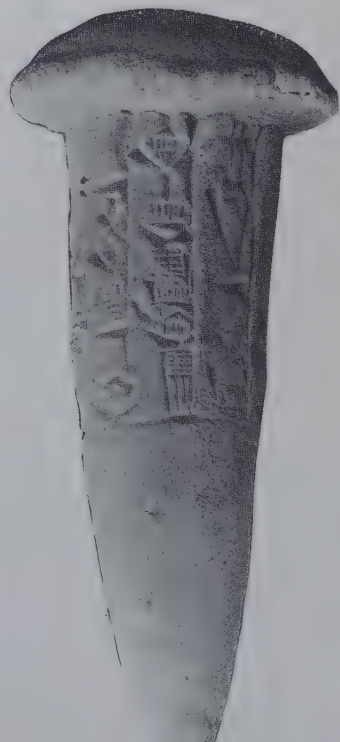
With the expansion of commerce rises the necessity for a legal code. We have reason to believe that the earliest code to be compiled was Sumerian. The Hammurabi code is obviously based on a legal tradition which, even at this early date, had its share of legal jargon. Hammurabi was a Semite, an Amorite, to be exact, and lived some centuries later than the period with which we are at the moment concerned. It is a witness to the strength of the Sumerian tradition that he invoked sanction for his own system by conscious adherence to Sumerian forms.

As has often occurred elsewhere, the invention of writing accompanies the beginning of monumental architecture. In Sumer, the first written documents were found in temple ruins which are among the earliest large-scale productions. Today, these buildings show little of their former splendor but in times gone by, they must have been imposing



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Votive cone of Gudea. 2450-2400 B. C.
The inscription reads: "For the god Ningirsu the exalted kind his (servant) king Gudea, patesi (governor) of Lagas his temple in Girsu built".



Votive cone of Gudea: Trans.: "For Ningirsu, the mighty hero of Enlil, Gudea, the governor of Lagash, accomplished what was fitting. His temple E-ninnu of the bright storm bird he built for him; its foundation he restored for him."
←

landmarks. The familiar buttresses and niches which ornament with light and shadow otherwise plain walls are thought by some scholars to have had a structural function in reed construction. Translated into brick, they must have formed a linear system not unlike that of modern horizontal architecture. The restoration of these structures is typologically certain. Not only the floor-plan lies before the archaeologist *in situ*, but ancient Sumerian plans, very like modern blue-prints have been recovered. A cylinder seal showing an *en face* view of a temple completes the picture.

Whether the king who built or restored a temple did it as an act of piety, to impress his jealous neighbors, or to promote employment, he never left any doubt in the minds of his contemporaries or failed to secure the knowledge to posterity that it was he, King so-and-so, beloved of such-and-such, ruler of the four corners of the earth (if he were especially blessed), who had done it. Often the paving or building bricks were inscribed with his name. This was not altogether satisfactory, however, as the name sometimes became hidden in the course of construction. For this reason, clay nails were often inserted into the walls, possibly a throw-back to the days when they were used to secure mats onto reed walls, and had a specifically decorative function. The nails illustrated are both votive cones of Gudea (c. 2450-2400 B. C.) from the Temple of Ningirsu at Lagash which he restored (Ills. p. 43).

No discussion of Sumer, however brief, could afford to omit reference to Sumerian art. Contrary to popular belief, it sometimes attained that degree of perfection which admits of no comparisons. The gold and lapis lazuli treasures of the Ur cemetery of kings are such as occur once and for all time. In technique alone, they have never been equalled. Spectacular finds of this sort are not, of course, everyday occurrences. If the archaeologist and art historian rejoice in finding them, they are not ill-content with more prosaic things. Art, like language, or architecture, or legal systems, or whatever aspect of a culture we may elect to study, is but one manifestation of the mentality of the people who evolved that culture, and the history of their art is but one record of their cultural progress.

In the earliest times, down to the Jemdet Nasr period, and at numerous intervals subsequently, there were many direct and indirect contacts with Elam to the northeast, with Egypt to the west, and, though rarely, to far-off India. The vase here illustrated shows traces of Elamitic affinities. Many similar specimens have been found on Babylonian sites. If the poles supporting crescents may really be interpreted as symbols of the moon-god, a Babylonian provenience is not unlikely.¹ The vase dates to the end of the third millennium (Ill. p. 45). Animal groups of this sort had already occurred in pre-Dynastic Egypt. The Elamitic and the Mesopotamian animal style had some, as yet unknown, common ancestry. The proto-dynastic Egyptian style was, on the contrary, directly derived from Sumer but it was never exploited to the degree to which the Sumerian prototypes might have given impetus. In this fact alone may be traced the fundamental difference between these two great civilizations. Egyptian culture was, in a sense, parthonogenic, and only rarely did outside influences encroach upon the parent stem. The civilization of Sumer, and those which were largely derived from it, were all-absorbing. The racial composition of the land was from the beginning inextricably

1. See references sub text to illustration in CVA. U.S.A. Fasc. 2 R.I.S.D. Fasc. 1. Pl. III 1 (a) and (b).



Fig. V. Jug, black matt finish with incised white lines. End of the IIIrd millennium.

mixed, and perhaps for this reason, a process of adaptation rather than one of selection prevailed.

The Sumerians have left to posterity a goodly number of statues and reliefs and thousands of seal cylinders which are almost a cinematographic record of their lives. As in modern times, fashions came and went, but dominant throughout the course of these changes is an extraordinary vitality. In Egyptian art, this vitality was expressed through the tension of outlines or in the subtle handling of a nervous structure, even in repose. The Babylonian worked from the surface inward. This produced enormous muscles and heavy action. Even heraldic emblems contain a threat.

The early and rapid development of civilization in Egypt and Sumer is directly due to their highly organized agricultural economy. Although Elam and Assyria also had a brilliant prehistoric period behind them, it was not until the end of the third millennium that they first entered upon the stage of history. To the north toward Lake Van in Armenia is the seat of still another culture group named from the famous mound at Tell Halaf, and assigned variously from the fourth millennium to the middle of the second. In Anatolia, a rather simple peasant culture continued until down into the third millennium. Each of these units was affected to some degree by the influence of Sumerian and even, in some cases, of Egyptian civilization. The pattern of the spread of this influence is peculiarly difficult to trace. Sometimes it came slowly, reaching the periphery of the



Cylinder seal, Babylonian, 2450-2400 B. C. (?) The god Adad and goddess Shala with Gilgamesh on the left. Hematite.



Cylinder seal, Babylonian, c.2450-2000 B.C.(?) The god Adad, goddess Shala, and a third, probably a fertility deity. Hematite.



Cylinder seal, from Erech. 2650-2500 B.C. (?) Dynasty of Agade. Gilgamesh struggling with wild beasts. Rose quartz.

Near East like the outer ripple of a series of concentric circles made by casting a stone into water. Then, as the civilizations to the south advanced materially and engaged in commerce, direct contacts were established and the very newest was superimposed upon the very old.

Against such a background in Anatolia sprung the Hittite Empires. The great archives from their city near Boghaz-Keui have yielded sufficient material as one author cheerfully says, "to fill the gap between the rise of Babylon and the Fall of Troy." So powerful did this empire become that Egyptian pharaohs addressed as "brother" its rulers and wooed and won their daughters. This picture hardly corresponds to the casual references in the Bible which had led commentators to regard the Hittites as a local tribe.

The political decline of Sumer which preceded the rise of the Hammurabi dynasty by no means marked the end of Sumerian influence. To the period of its decline we owe the enormous literary activity which is responsible for having preserved to us the poems, liturgies and legends which are so important to our knowledge of Sumerian non-material culture, and which exercised such a vital effect on our own religious tradition. They are



Tile frieze from the Procession street at Babylon. (605-562 B. C.).

frequently illustrated on seal cylinders, which were used as a signature in such cases as a seal or signature might be used today. (Ill. p. 46.)

Semitic Babylonian art continued to use the Sumerian repertory of motifs but slowly a change is observable in the ductus and in the atmosphere. There is an increase in sophistication which means that there was also increased restraint. This trend was exploited by the Assyrians with remarkable success. No one who has seen the palace sculptures of Assurbanipal can fail to be impressed by the great degree of *savoir faire*, nor, on the other hand, to realize that the original inspiration came from this other already highly developed art. The same phenomenon is to be seen in Scythian art which was, in its turn, influenced by Assyrian. It is one of those curious paradoxes that a people

who knew the greatest refinements of material culture were abnormally cruel. A conquered enemy impaled on a post was no skelton in the closet. On the contrary, such scenes appear on reliefs as being as legitimate a way to impress the spectator with the majesty and might of a king as are the wonderful hunting scenes which awake in us a kindred feeling for a people who loved the beauty of the animal kingdom as we do today.

Babylonian art retained rounder forms, on the whole, and much more of the symbolical content which it had inherited from Sumer. Particularly noteworthy are the Babylonian boundary stones which, to modern students, are the first steps in the study of occultism. Most famous of all Babylonian monuments, and perhaps most famous of the relics of the Near East, is the Ishtar gate at Babylon, and the great Procession Street. It was a custom at certain festivals to escort the god about the city and this gateway was that through which his triumphal approach to his temple Esagila was made. The temple was high on a mound, "reaching to the sky" and situated within the citadel.

The pavement of the Procession Street was covered with enormous limestone blocks and slabs of white-veined red breccia lined the sides. The walls are of bright and light blue glazed tiles, now very much altered in color due to oxidation. A long series of lions, about sixty on each surface, ornamented the sides. Each of the lions was cast in a mold, so cunningly conceived that its parts are scarcely visible where the joints occur (Ill. p. 47.)

The gate itself forms a large block with two archways combined by connecting walls. The outer surface was decorated with at least eleven registers of alternate bulls, symbol of Ramman, and mushussus, dragon creatures with animal forefeet, hindfeet of birds of prey, a scorpion tail and the head of a horned viper. This was the symbol of Marduk. The Ishtar Gate was built by King Nebuchadnezzar whose name is stamped on the building bricks.¹

One of the most interesting fields of Oriental research is that of the translation of Oriental culture into the Greek, Roman, Celtic and Romanesque cultures in Europe. Today it is, in one phase or another, on every side of us. He who knows for what to look, sees not only what he sought, but sees it in a thousand new and unexpected combinations.

1. Bulletin R. I. S. D. Vol. XXIII No. 2 April 1935 p. 31.

